

# Winchester Police and Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community Offer Safety Reminders Ahead of High School Prom and Town-Wide Events

WINCHESTER -- As residents of all ages look forward to Winchester's spring traditions of the En Ka Fair, senior prom and Town Day, Chief Peter MacDonnell and Winchester Police wish to offer information and tips for remaining safe during each event.

The En Ka Fair takes place on May 17 and 18, senior prom is scheduled for May 29 and Town Day will be held on June 1.

"Each of these events is well attended enjoyed by Winchester's residents," Chief MacDonnell said. "Our top priority is ensuring that everyone has a good time and gets home safely. We want high school seniors in particular to be conscious of their behavior and the importance of making good decisions on prom night."

Residents should be aware that **some roads will be closed** during these events. Beginning on Tuesday, May 15 at 6 p.m. and continuing through the morning of Sunday, May 19, Skillings Road will be closed in both directions from the high school entrance to the Town Hall intersection in order to accommodate the EnKa fair. On Thursday, May 15, Mount Vernon Street will be closed in both directions from the rotary to the Town Hall intersection starting at 6 p.m. and also continuing through the morning of Sunday, May 19. For both the fair and Town Day, motorists should exercise extreme caution due to increased pedestrian traffic on town streets and sidewalks.

Winchester Police will have an increased presence at each event, but fair and Town Day attendees should remain vigilant and maintain awareness of their surroundings. Anyone who sees something that appears suspicious or out of place should immediately notify an event organizer or public safety officials. Parents please keep in mind that during this time of year, risky behaviors (such as underage alcohol use, vaping and/or juuling and marijuana use) among our middle and high school aged youth may increase.

Prom can be one of the most memorable and exciting events of their high school career, but for parents, it can be a stressful night. Students should remember the decisions made before, during and after prom can have long-term consequences.

Chief MacDonnell recommends parents reinforce the importance of good decision making with their children, and encourages families to remember the following guidelines as prom night approaches.

**Think responsibly:** Students are responsible for their own actions, and should not feel pressured to take part in inappropriate behavior — prior, during, or after the dance. It's OK to say no, even if others are participating.

**Travel safely:** According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teenagers. Always buckle up, no matter how short the trip. It's the law.

- Don't drink and drive, and don't get in a car with a driver who has been drinking.
- Don't text and drive. Texting and cell phone use while driving is illegal for Massachusetts teens under 18 years old.

**Plan ahead and know the law:** After prom parties should be supervised. Students should make plans to be with friends and notify parents or guardians where they'll be and how to reach them.

- The Good Samaritan Law (M.G.L. 94C §34A) states that a person experiencing a drug-related overdose (or someone with the overdosing party) who seeks medical assistance will not be charged or prosecuted for possession of a controlled substance.
- The law now also provides immunity from prosecution for those under twenty-one who unlawfully possession alcohol (c. 138 § 34C) and those who unlawfully purchase alcohol (c. 138 § 34A) when seeking medical attention for alcohol incapacitation. The person who calls for medical attention and the person in need of medical attention are immune from prosecution from these alcohol related offenses.
- Under the Social Host law, parents are criminally and civilly liable if they allow underage drinking to occur in their homes or any property controlled by them.

**Communicate:** Parents should reinforce to their children that they will not tolerate underage drinking, and that's it is illegal. Get students' itineraries for the evening, including whom they will be with, where they'll be going before and after the prom, and the phone numbers of where you can contact them. Come to a fair decision on a curfew and express any concerns about their health and safety.

**Be understanding:** Family members are urged to make it clear to their children that they can call them at any time for help, advice or a ride.

The Winchester Police Department is here as a resource for the community and our ultimate goal is to keep all people who live in or visit Winchester safe.

Please join us for a community presentation on the Challenges We Face With Underage Drinking on Tuesday evening May 7, 2019 from 7-8pm in the Winchester High School Library/Media Center. This program is being co-sponsored by the Winchester Coalition for a Safer Community and the Winchester Police Department. All are welcome to attend.

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